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AUTHOR Wiles, Richard L.
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ABSTRACT

A Pennsylvania project produced a multi-media program designed to increase awareness of and change attitudes about occupational sex-role stereotyping among parents of present and future students in vocational education. The multi-media program consisted of a fifteen-minute color/sound motion picture on nontraditional careers entitled "Vocational Education in a Changing World"; a parents' guidebook presenting similar information in printed form; and a trainer's guidebook to help in publicizing, explaining, and generating discussion about the film and its subject matter. Real people were chosen for the film to add credibility and show natural enthusiasm. Materials were intended to encourage the achievement of true sex fairness in vocational education, decrease the tendency to make occupational choices based upon sex-role stereotyping among students and their parents, and enhance the job satisfaction and performance possibilities for vocational education graduates. A color brochure was also developed for promotional purposes. (YLB)

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NOVA PRODUCTIONS, INC.
Suite 301, Mellon Bank Building
P.O. Box 870, Butler, Pa. 16001 (412) 283-4402

FINAL REPORT

Production of a Multi-Media Package to Promote Positive Parental Attitudes Toward Non-Traditional Vocational Education

(Contract No: 85-9805)
Project Dates: July 1, 1979 to April 30, 1980

Prepared by: Richard L. Wiles, President
Nova Productions, Inc.
P.O. Box 870
Butler, PA 16001
May 20, 1980

for

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Research and Evaluation
Research Coordinating Unit
for Vocational Education

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....PAGE 1

ABSTRACT.....PAGE 1

I. PROBLEM.....PAGE 4

II. METHODS.....PAGE 7

III. ANALYSIS.....PAGE 10

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS.....PAGE 12

CONCLUSION.....PAGE 14

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The contractor wishes to acknowledge the help, advice and cooperation made available to this project by a host of individuals and institutions whose contributions both singly and jointly were vital to its successful completion.

First and most importantly, the continuing interest in and commitment to the project by the Dept. of Vocational Education's Mr. James Lewis and Ms. Terry Reed has been an important factor in enabling the project to accomplish its objectives while at the same time developing as a superior example of fair, balanced, non-sexist communication. Their advice and guidance have been invaluable. In addition, Ms. Jackie Cullen, of the Sex Equity Office, assisted ably in getting the project off to a good start, especially in the early scripting stages when she was most directly involved.

Literally hundreds of individuals contributed to the project in various ways and their help has been greatly appreciated, especially those vocational education students and graduates who appeared in the film and whose pioneering efforts in non-traditional career fields made--in a very basic way--this entire project possible.

The following institutions, both public and private, contributed by allowing film crews to disrupt their routine for hours or even days--sometimes at considerable inconvenience. Their cooperation was much appreciated:

Bethlehem Steel Corporation

Brashear High School

The Earl Wheeler School

Eastern Westmoreland AVTS

Harrisburg-Steelton-Highspire AVTS

Lancaster Area Adult Enrichment Center

North Hills High School

Pittsburgh Beauty Academy

Richardson, Gordon, and Associates

Williamsport Area Community College

A special thanks to Norma Mountain, Claire Reid and Sarah Hayden, all of whom appear in the film portion of the project and in each instance contributed greatly at considerable personal inconvenience.

In addition; Ben Jenkins, of the department's audio/visual section was involved in script conferences, location filming and editing sessions and made a vital contribution to the successful completion of the project.

ABSTRACT

Title of Project: A Multi-Media Package to Promote Positive Parental Attitudes Toward Non-Traditional Vocational Education

Project No.: 85-9805

Begin and End Dates: July 1, 1979 to April 30, 1980

Summary of Proposal

1. Objectives: To produce a carefully conceived and professionally executed multi-media program designed to increase awareness of and change attitudes about occupational sex role stereotyping among parents of present and future students in vocational education.
2. Description: The program involves three separate but related sets of materials (1) a 15 minute color/sound film production, (2) an associated Trainer's Guidebook, and (3) a set of promotional materials.
3. Contribution to Education: In meeting its stated objectives, the program should encourage the achievement of true sex fairness in vocational education, decrease the tendency to make occupational choices based upon sex-role stereotyping among students and their parents, and enhance the job satisfaction and performance possibilities for vocational education graduates.
4. Products to be Delivered:
   a. A 15-minute sound/color 16MM film (10 copies).
   b. Internegative of above film.
   c. Outtakes.
   d. Trainer's Guide Book (Single camera-ready copy)
   e. Original sound tracks.
   f. Parents guide Book (1,000 copies).
   g. Promotional brochure (2,000 copies)
   h. Half-tone photos (6).
   i. Technical report (5 copies).

NOTE: Since the total project spanned two fiscal years, the following final report deals with the actual production and procedures involved in creating the deliverables. Initial planning, research activities and scripting are covered in the Final Technical Report under Project No. 93-9023.

METHODS

Highest quality film techniques and materials were utilized in the production of deliverables. Content and tone were enhanced by very close supervision by Vocational Education staff who were present at most shooting locations and various editing sessions. Staff involvement included assistance in locating and choosing many of the individuals who appeared in the film.

OUTCOMES

1. All deliverables were completed satisfactorily.
2. Locating and filming "real people" who exhibited the necessary enthusiasm, dedication and ability to articulate their feelings about non-traditional careers proved to be the most difficult part of the project. Vocational Education staff contribution was absolutely critical in this regard.
3. Staff involvement at shooting locations and editing sessions was a welcome and valuable ingredient in the production of communication materials that involve such a complex and sensitive area.

AUDIENCE

The materials will be made available to Parent/Teacher Organizations throughout Pennsylvania and perhaps other states as well. They are directed at parents of late elementary and junior high students who may have questions about the viability of non-traditional careers.

PUBLICATIONS AND AVAILABLE MATERIALS

1. Final Report.

2. "Vocational Education in a Changing World" a 15 minute color/ sound motion picture on non-traditional careers.

3. Color brochure - presenting a brief explanation of the film and its objectives.

4. Parents Guidebook - to be made available to viewers of the film and presenting similar information in printed form.

5. Trainer's Guidebook - to be used by leaders of organizations that will be showing the film. It is designed to help in publicizing, explaining and generating discussion about the film and its subject matter.

I. PROBLEM

Pennsylvania's vocational education programs are intended to be utilized equally by all students in the Commonwealth and furthermore, sex equity in vocational training--as in all educational endeavors--has been mandated for those institutions receiving Federal funds as a result of Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 and Title II of the Education Amendments of 1976.

Eliminating sex-bias and instituting sex fairness in any context is difficult at best, due to pressures of tradition, history, socialization, and the attitudes of a male dominated society. In the context of vocational education, however, the elimination of sex-bias is even more difficult because sex-role steretyping appears to manifest its greatest strength and pervasiveness in the area of occupational choices--as is evident in the vast number of job categories that seem to be traditionally "locked in" to male-only or female-only molds.

Insuring that institutions, administrators, and teachers involved in vocational training treat all students in a sex-fair manner is only part of the problem. Theoretically, if all vocational counseling, admission policies and procedures were to achieve 100% elimination of sex-bias, then we would find an equal distribution of female and male students among all of the various occupational training programs provided by vocational education. This obviously has not happened, and is unlikely to occur in the immediate future, largely due to occupational sex role stereotyping among the population at large--and more specifically--among vocational students and their parents.

It is apparent that if Mary and John, their peers and their parents, expect that John should be the auto mechanic and Mary the nurse, and that a reversal of these roles is unthinkable and beyond consideration, then enrollment in nurses programs will continue to be predominately female and in auto repair programs predominately male.

The attitudes that form the basis for occupational sex role stereotyping tend to thwart the goals of vocational education specifically and of society generally, since they eliminate options, reduce choices, and thereby decrease the possibility for individuals to achieve optimum fulfillment, satisfaction, and productivity in their working lives. If, for example, Mary has the potential to become the happier, more productive auto mechanic and John the more satisfied, more responsive nurse, then the system, as it now exists, is not working as well as it should.

The problem then, becomes one of changing attitudes among students and parents regarding the range of occupational alternatives that are available to and should be considered by a young person who will soon be entering today's job market. It is admittedly more difficult to change the attitudes of a portion of the general population outside of the field of vocational education than it is to change policies and procedures within it. However, attitudinal changes and increased public awareness regarding specific problems have been successfully generated in the past with the help of media programs similar to the one proposed herein. The anti-smoking campaign and the environmental movement are just two of the recent examples of problems that have been addressed with great impact through the audio/visual media.

The problem that occupational sex role stereotyping poses for vocational education should prove to be no more challenging than some of the other attitudinal problems that have been effectively dealt with by various other institutions in our society.

The purpose of this project, then, involves the production of a multi-media package centered around a 15 minute color/sound motion picture film that--by showing and dramatizing happy, successful people who are involved in non-traditional occupations--will motivate an audience of parents and students to reconsider their negative attitudes or preconceptions about sex roles as related to careers. By presenting statistical information dramatic situations, projections about the future--and most importantly--real people who are building successful careers outside of the stereotypes, the film helps break down resistance to the idea of non-traditional careers and creates an awareness that alternatives to the sex role stereotypes do in fact exist.

Obviously no communication is effective unless it reaches its audience. Therefore, the project also has produced various coordinated print materials designed to publicize the film, encourage its use, enable group leaders to elaborate upon its message through discussion and follow-up, and give the audience some "take home" information for further thought and reflection.

II. METHODS

The central facet of the project was, obviously, the motion picture film itself. The other deliverables took their theme, tone, content--even their titles--from the film production.

Several conferences with Vocational Education staff and consultants, including Ben Jenkins, James Lewis Jacqueline Cullen, Terry Reed and Mary Ellen Verhayden-Hilliard, resulted in final approval of a finished shooting script, plus identification of various shooting locations in Westmoreland Co., Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Allentown, Williamsport and Lancaster.

Highest standards of filming technique, materials and equipment were used in the project, including double system crystal-sync-sound Nagra recording equipment, extensive use of wireless and boom microphones, Eastman Negative original 16mm film stock and extensive use of auxiliary interior lighting. A full complement film crew was used at all shooting locations, consisting of director, cinematographer, lighting technician, sound technician and one or more grips. The "full crew" approach contributed greatly to flexibility and mobility and generally enhanced the over-all quality of the production.

It was early decided to use "real people" throughout the film and to resort to use of actors either infrequently or not at all. This approach was intended to--and does--give an added measure of credibility to the film, however, it also presented certain anticipated obstacles involving the film of "non-professionals" who are enthusiastic, motivated and articulate while at the same time relatively at ease in front of the camera with its attendant lights, microphones and pressures.

The problem was solved in two ways. First, extensive pre-scouting was employed to help narrow the choices of potential film subjects. School administrators, teachers, employers--anyone at the various shooting locations who might have knowledge of the type of individual needed-were enlisted to suggest possible subjects. Vocational Education staff members were deeply involved in assisting with this "talent search".

However, it was quickly apparent that the pre-selection process was not infallible. Certain subjects of highest reccomendation were just not able to over come their reactions to the "strangeness" of being filmed sufficiently to give a credible performance. Therefore the second part of the solution was utilized. This involved "over-shooting"--a situation not uncommon in films of this type. Over 12,000 feet of film was shot, with about 22 feet being exposed for every foot appearing in the finished production.

The filming itself was done at various private and public institutions around the state (see acknowledgements) and took place over a period of 16 shooting days. Vocational Education staff members James Lewis and Terry Reed were in attendance at all primary shooting locations along with Ben Jenkins of the audio/visual staff and were therefore available for on-the-spot advice and decision making. Their involvement with the actual filming enabled them to exert tremendous positive influence on content and subject matter and resulted in hundreds of worthwhile mini-conferences during the continuing process of filming.

They were also deeply involved in the editing process and, in fact, viewed nearly every foot of original film shot. With so much material from which to choose, it became obvious that the decisions about using this person over that person, this comment over that comment, would have a pervasive effect on the tone, content and emotional message of the finished production. In viewing the footage prior to editing--and working closely with the editors--the state staffers were able to precisely control the thrust of the finished production and ensure that the film would optimumly meet its intended objectives.

The first stage of the editing process culminated in the viewing of a "rough cut" of the production by Dr. Carroll Curtis, Vocational Education Staffmembers, representatives from the Public Information Office, and others. Various changes and suggestions were discussed and decided upon. As a result, some additional filming was completed and final editing was accomplished. This finished "fine cut" was again viewed, and approved with minor changes that were incorporated in the finished production.

Close coordination between the contractor and the state staff was also evidenced throughout the production of the printed materials. Advice on art work, content, style, type face--including extensive editing--resulted in the satisfactory completion of all phases of the project and greatly enhanced the quality, appeal and effectiveness of the deliverables.

Special Note: Nova Productions is holding release forms for the literally hundreds of subjects who were filmed. If similar projects requiring similar on-camera performances should be required in the future, Nova will upon request supply names and addresses of those persons who were particularly effective in their appearances on film.

III. ANALYSIS

Of all of the communications media, film making requires the coordinated effort of more people than perhaps any other. It also entails the melding of a host of variables--technical considerations, content requirements, artistic values, style, message, emotion, distribution, audience, etc.--into an effective coherent whole.

This project has not only accomplished its stated objectives in the narrow sense of completing the materials called for, but has produced materials of superior effectiveness and quality. The film and publications involved should prove to have an apparent and quite positive impact on their intended audience.

Several of the most important factors that contributed to the successful completion of this project are as follows:

1. Technical -
   a. Use of ECN Eastman Negative film stock.
   b. Extensive use of auxiliary interior lighting.
   c. Use of a full complement film crew.

Positive comments on the color quality and "look" of the film are attributable to (a) and (b) above. All of the above items increase production costs, but the advantages gained in technical quality are, budget permitting, quite apparent.

2. On-Camera Personnel -

The consistant quality of those appearing on-camera in the film--especially those with speaking parts--is attributable to careful searching and to overfilming, i.e. choosing only the few best from among the many filmed. Both techniques consume much time and effort but are necessary to achieve quality results.

3. Content and Effectiveness -

To enhance awareness and change attitudes of a target audience regarding a subject as sensitive, complex and emotion-laden as occupational sex-role stereotyping requires more than competent film-making: it requires long term knowledge of the subject itself coupled with a deep understanding of the psychology and motivations of that target audience. This knowledge and understanding of the subject and of the goals of the Dept. of Vocational Education were brought to the project by James Lewis, Jacqueline Cullen and Terry Reed. Their involvement, at times on an almost daily basis, was instrumental in keeping the project on the right track and ensuring that its stated objectives would be met. Their interest, enthusiasm and assistance were vital to the production of an effective set of communication materials.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are applicable to similar productions of communication materials involving motion picture film.

1. Negative film stock should be used for original filming because of its grain characteristics, high speed and excellent color balance and latitude.

2. Budget provisions should allow for and require full lighting for all interior filming. It gives a professional look and added dimension to any production, which cannot be duplicated using techniques involving "available" light sources.

3. For "documentary" style films, adequate time and personnel allowances should be made for "talent searches", along with anticipated overfilming requirements. The alternative involves being forced to use filmed segments that may detract from the overall quality of the production.

4. A state staff person or persons, intimately familiar with the subject matter of the production should be assigned to each project, with a requirement including attendance at shooting locations and editing sessions. Experience with this project indicates that such involvement, especially in terms of content, is essential to the production of a motion picture that is assured of meeting the goals and objectives of the state agency involved.

The value of having a subject matter specialist involved deeply in the film making process is basically this:

Film-making, as a process, amounts simply to making hundreds, if not thousands, of small choices--choosing this scene over that, this person over that, this comment over that. All else being equal, the film-maker will generally be governed by artistic or "filmic" value in making those choices. The subject matter specialist, on the other hand, will be more inclined to base those choices on content, on nuance of meaning, on the subjective goals of the production. With a deeper understanding of the needs of both the state agency and intended audience, the subject matter specialist's input to the shooting and editing phases of production can become a vital factor in determining the success or failure of a complex motion picture production project.

V. CONCLUSION

No communications project whether written or visual is capable of accomplishing its objectives unless it reaches its intended audience in significant numbers. Too often distribution considerations are handled as an afterthought.

One of the great strengths of this particular project is that the planning and development of methods for distributing the film to its intended audience were begun at the outset and were completed in tandum with the film production itself. The brochures, press releases, and auxilliary print materials ensures that the production will not only reach its audience of parents of late elementary and junior high school students, but that those parents will become active participants in examining and discussing the negative manner in which knee-jerk sex role stereotyping can effect the career choices of their daughters and sons.

That the audience for this project's materials is extant and waiting is pointed to by the fact that requests for the film began coming in before the project was even completed.